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POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY OF TRUCIAL 'OMAN AND QATAR

ALEXANDER MELAMID

UNTIL the 1930's pirating, slave trading, and arms smuggling were the occupations of the native population on the southeast shores of the Persian Gulf, and they largely determined the status of the region in international affairs. Since then the oil industry, with its manifold economic and political aspects, has begun to replace these earlier "trades." The effect of this change offers an unusual insight into the evolution of states and their territorial and maritime sovereignty. Despite the present importance of the Persian Gulf in world affairs, information on Trucial 'Oman, and to a smaller extent on Qatar, is scarce and contradictory.

The Physical and Historical Background

Physically, the south coast of the Persian Gulf is uninviting. Shallow waters with dangerous reefs fringe the beaches, and the bars across the mouths of the many inlets and coastal creeks make them inaccessible to the smallest ocean-going vessels. The shore line forms the margin of a low, undulating plateau with a surface of sand or loose stones, which merges to the south into the even less hospitable and little-known desert of the Rub' al Khali. Occasionally the plateau is interrupted by shallow salt pans or by insignificant hills that may expose the bedrock, mainly Eocene limestone. There are no continuous wadies, or any other marked features. The low northern extension of the mountains of 'Oman, which terminates in the rugged and deeply indented peninsula of Masandam, forms the eastern boundary of the region. Rainfall is estimated at less than five inches a year, falling in a few winter showers. Temperatures on the coast are high: averages range from the high sixties in January to the nineties in July. Humidity is also high. Because of the oppressive summer weather, the oil company operating in Qatar suspends the work of its seismographic exploration crews from May to November. However, the humidity does not penetrate far into the interior, and exploratory activities in, for example, the neighboring inland oil fields of Saudi Arabia continue throughout the year.

The vegetation is scanty. Economically useful plants that grow without irrigation can feed only camels, sheep, and goats. Aside from a stable kept by the sheikh of Ajman, no horses are reported anywhere, and even the number of cattle is small.

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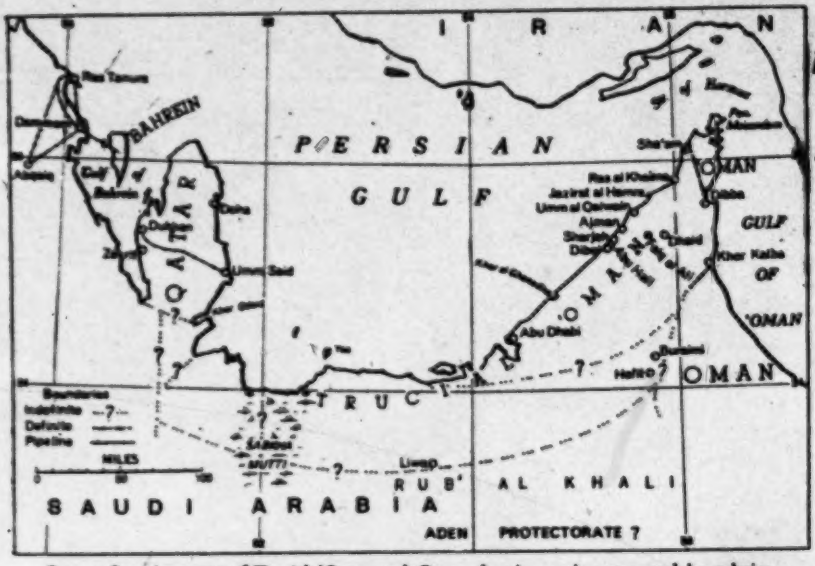

FIG. 1—Location map of Trucial 'Oman and Qatar, showing various reported boundaries.

number of cattle is small. Wells are far apart; many are brackish, and only a few have sufficient water for surface or subsurface irrigation. Thus the whole peninsula of Qatar contains only two or three struggling date gardens. Larger wells are reported below the foothills of the mountains of 'Oman, which explain the more extensive date gardens there (similar to those of the Batinah Coast, on the east side of the mountain range) and the cultivation of some cereals. The total population is small and largely migratory. Estimates range from 7000 to 25,000 for Qatar, and from 40,000 to 105,000 for the remainder of the coast, concentrated in the northeastern part; from the base of the Qatar peninsula to Abu Dhabi the coast is reported to be virtually empty of human beings today, except for a few Bedouins migrating from the inland wells of Liwa.[1]

Because of the scanty endowment of the land, occupations deriving revenue from the sea became dominant. The port of Sharjah was reported to send 350 boats to the pearl fishery and to have in addition about a hundred fishing boats.[2] Pearling is generally limited to a small but indented stretch of coast near this port, and receipts are believed to fluctuate substantially from year to year.[3] The growth of both fishing and pearling is assumed to be rela-

[1] W[ilfred] Thesiger: Across the Empty Quarter, *Geogr. Journ.*, Vol. 111, 1948, pp. 1–21; reference on p. 9.

[2] S. B. Miles: The Country and Tribes of the Persian Gulf (2 vols., London, 1919), Vol. 2, p. 442.

[3] Raymond O'Shea: The Sand Kings of Oman (London, 1947), p. 132.

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tively recent, since none of the earlier observers comment much on them. Wood and sailcloth for boats have to be imported from a distance, a situation that may have seriously hampered these occupations in the past. In view of the absence of a hinterland and the poverty of the shore, there seems to have been little opportunity for trade. Recently the export (probably smuggled) to Iran of imported sugar and textiles is reported to have grown, but no statistics are available.

Armed interference with the ships plying the ancient trade routes from India and East Africa to Basra and the West through the Strait of Hormuz and the narrow funnel of the Persian Gulf was the major source of income for the inhabitants. The area became known as the "Pirate Coast," a name still found on many maps. Attacks on British ships took place as late as 1905, and the attack on a large Arab dhow in 1944 has been reported.[4] Prevention of piracy would have required the constant presence of relatively large fleets to block the many inlets into which the pirates could withdraw their small ships. An alternative would have been the occupation of the whole coast—a costly procedure, and hardly worth while economically. Therefore trading powers in the Persian Gulf, such as the Portuguese in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and the Moslem empires before and after, limited their repression of piracy to occasional raids ashore in which one or two main pirate strongholds would be captured and held for a short time. Obviously, such measures were neither effective nor permanent.

From the end of the eighteenth century on, British trade in the Persian Gulf became increasingly important, and after many vicissitudes a British fleet was dispatched in 1819–1820 to punish and eliminate the pirates. After the usual bombardments the sheikhs of the coast were made to sign a solemn agreement not to fight one another; this was supposed to remove the main cause of piracy. Further, they promised to refrain themselves from piracy and to suppress it among their subjects. However, as soon as the British fleet withdrew, the agreement was broken. After another show of British arms, another treaty was signed by the sheikhs in 1835. Unlike the earlier agreement, the covenant of 1835 did not provide for universal peace, but only for a maritime truce: the sheikhs agreed not to fight one another on the sea, or to engage themselves, or permit their subjects to engage, in piracy—war on land was still permitted. In return, the British government agreed not to interfere in the internal affairs of the sheikhdoms, including their many land wars. Perhaps because of this unique outlet for the energies of the sheikhs

[4] For example, by O'Shea, *op. cit.*, p. 176

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and their subjects, assisted by the occasional vigilance of British cruisers and sloops, piracy ceased, and since the 1850's the coast (except for Qatar) has been known as the "Trucial Coast," and the sheikhdoms collectively as "Trucial 'Oman," though there exists no political connection between the sheikhdoms of the coast and the sultanate of Muscat and 'Oman to the east.

Slave trading in natives of the coast, other Arabs, and Africans, and also gunrunning, long a subsidiary occupation, became predominant after the establishment of the maritime truce. Before the end of the nineteenth century Great Britain was forced to make another series of treaties with the sheikhs outlawing these practices.[5] In return for small subsidies, the sheikhs were prohibited from granting concessions for mining operations or bunkering stations to nationals of other states except with the approval of the British government. Further, British officials stationed in the area of the Persian Gulf obtained the right to supervise any foreign nationals entering or residing in the area of the sheikhs. These clauses were supposed to guarantee Great Britain against the threatened acquisition of bases by France, Russia, and Germany, which would have disturbed British naval dominance in the Indian Ocean. By means of these treaties the sheikhdoms of the Persian Gulf became virtual British protectorates in all matters of international concern, but without British military occupation or civilian administration. The British Indian rupee gradually became the currency in use along the coast; in the interior the Maria Theresa dollar is more acceptable.

In accordance with the policy of nonintervention in internal affairs, Great Britain recognizes no boundaries between the sheikhdoms. Trucial sheikhs are therefore able to attack and absorb one another's territory without restriction, and, similarly, new Trucial sheikhdoms can emerge if they agree to the provisions of the treaties. For example, the 1820 agreement was signed by eight local sheikhs (exclusive of the sheikh of Bahrein, signing for Qatar), but only six were left to sign the 1835 treaty. In 1914, only five sheikhdoms were reported to exist,[6] and today the number seems to be seven Trucial sheikhdoms and one sheikhdom, Fujaira, outside the Trucial treaties (Table I). The fate of the vanished sheikhdoms is unknown. As Sir Percy Cox[7]

[5] It should be noted that these treaties refer only to the external relations of the region. Therefore slavery of natives is exclusively subject to local law and custom and is independent of the treaty relation with Great Britain. Several recent reports mention the existence of slavery in the region but without citing definite cases. Nothing is known of the extent of the slavery, its conditions, or its economic importance.

[6] For example, in Peace Handbooks, Vol. 13, Foreign Office, Historical Section, London, 1920, p. 43.

[7] Some Excursions in Oman, *Geogr. Journ.*, Vol. 66, 1925, pp. 193–227; reference on p. 200.

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TABLE 1—STATES OF THE SOUTHEASTERN PERSIAN GULF REGION
(The population is the estimated settled population.)

STATE	POLITICAL STATUS	CAPITAL AND POPULATION	REPORTED BOUNDARIES	REMARKS
QATAR*	Trucial sheikhdom until 1868; British confirmation of independent British-protected status in 1913 and 1916.	Doha	East-west across the peninsula from Khor el Odeid; area given as 4500 square miles.	Resident British representative since 1950; no statistical information available except data on crude-oil exports; dispute with Bahrein on rights in the northwest end of peninsula.
ABU DHABI	Trucial sheikhdom since 1820.	Abu Dhabi, 4000 to 10,000	On the coast west at Khor el Odeid, east at Khor al Ghamdha; one day's camel journey inland; area given as 2500 square miles.	In area probably the largest of the present Trucial states; the town of Abu Dhabi is connected to the mainland by a causeway covered with water at high tide, and has a poor supply of drinking water; good relations with the Bedouins of the region are reported.
DUBAI	Trucial sheikhdom since 1820.	Dibai, 20,000	On the coast west at Khor al Ghamdha, east at Abu Hail; area given as 1500 square miles.	The town of Dibai is probably the largest of the region, containing the local market for pearls and the office of the local representative of the petroleum concessionaire; seaplane base; the town is located on the most navigable creek of the area and is occasional port of call for steamers from overseas; recent visitors report friction between the sheikh and local Bedouins and with the descendants of the former ruling family (until last century) resident at Dairah, across the creek from Dibai.
SHARJAH	Trucial sheikhdom since 1820.	Sharjah, 3000 to 15,000	Enclave, sheikhdom of Ajman; invaches inland to Dhaid.	Aerodrome with fortified compound for passengers' accommodation; offshore parking grounds; residence of British representative for the Trucial Coast; formerly overlord of Ras al Khaimu and other sheikhdoms, and thus most important political power in the region; the town of Sharjah is visited by steamers from India.
AJMAN	Trucial sheikhdom since 1820.	Ajman 2000	Sometimes reported entirely enclosed by territory of Sharjah; also reported as inverting territory of Ras al Khaimu; area given as 150 square miles.	Sometimes reported to be tributary to Sharjah; sheikh keeps a riding stable.
UMM AL QAIWAIN	Trucial sheikhdom since 1820.	Umm al Qaiwain, 2000	Including the oasis Falaj al Ali; area given as 250 square miles.	In the past seems important than today; frequently at war during the eighteenth century; occupies inland strip part of Sharjah, and spads from north to south; the town of Umm al Qaiwain is located on a small peninsula.
RAS AL KHAIMA	Trucial sheikhdom since 1819.	Ras al Khaimu, 3000	On the coast west at Jazirat al Hamra, east at Sha'am; reported to extend inland but exclude the mountainous area.	In the past tributary to Sharjah; in 1952 the sheikh refused to give permission for the establishment of a flying-boat base; in contrast with other sheikhdoms, a large part of the revenue is derived from the sale of dates.

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TABLE I—*Continued*

STATE	POLITICAL STATUS	CAPITAL AND POPULATION	REPORTED BOUNDARIES	REMARKS
KALBA	Trucial sheikhdom since 1937.	Kalba, 3000 to 5000	On the coast of the Gulf of 'Oman north at Dibba, south at Khor Kalba; includes territory on the west side of the mountains of 'Oman.	In the past tributary to Sharjah.
'OMAN	Independent British-protected sultanate.	Muscat, 500,000	Exclave on the peninsula of Musandam west at Sha'am, east at Dibba; main territory on Gulf of 'Oman east of Khor Kalba.	'Oman sovereignty over peninsula of Musandam established with British help.
OTHER TERRITORIES:				
FUJAIRAH	Sheikhdom without Trucial status.	....	Probably enclave in Kalba located primarily near the Gulf of 'Oman.	In the past probably tributary to Sharjah.
BURAIMI	Neutral area claimed by Saudi Arabia, 'Oman, and Abu Dhabi.	3000	Probably bounded by many Trucial sheikhdoms and 'Oman.	Inland oasis reported before 1925 and today under the influence of Abu Dhabi.
HAFIT	Reported joint property of Abu Dhabi and 'Oman.	....	....	Near Buraimi.
DHAID	Reported as neutral part of Sharjah, and part of Kalba.	....	....	On [illegible] road from the Persian Gulf to Gulf of 'Oman.
LIWA	Political control nowhere described.	....	....	Southwest of Abu Dhabi; reported to be trading with Abu Dhabi.

[a]Parts of the region between the boundaries of Qatar and the town of Abu Dhabi may be territory of Saudi Arabia. South of the town of Abu Dhabi there may be territory of the Trucial sheikhdoms or of Saudi Arabia or of 'Oman or of Aden Protectorate.

As Sir Percy Cox[1] writes: "The relative position of the Principalities . . . depends almost entirely on the personalities of the ruling Shaikhs for the time being. Unfortunately, owing to the chronic prevalence . . . of . . . feuds, they have for the last few generations been a short-lived class." Besides the territories of the sheikhs, there are neutral areas. In one of them, the Buraimi Oasis, near the border of 'Oman, a durbar (an official meeting of all the Trucial sheikhs with a British representative) took place in 1945;[8] this inconveniently located place was selected because sheikhs' wars prevented the choice of a better place near the coast. Another neutral area (although there seems to be a difference of opinion on its status) is the oasis of Dhaid,[9] on the motorcar route from Sharjah to the

[8] O'Shea, *op. cit.* [see footnote 3, above], p. 171. See below (p. 204) for other claims to Buraimi.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 156. See also Desmond Vesey-Fitzgerald: From Hasa to Oman by Car, *Geogr. Rev.*, Vol. 42, 1952, pp. 544-560; reference on p. 553.

[1] [For footnote, see p. 197 of text -- Analyst]

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Gulf of 'Oman established by the Middle East Anti-Locust Unit in 1943. Besides Trucial sheikhs and their immediate subjects, there are Bedouins, who, however, do not engage in any activity on the seas and are thus outside the provisions of the treaties. In general, the Bedouins recognize the authority of one or another of the Trucial sheikhs, but changes of allegiance are numerous. Bedouins may decide to make wars of their own, or to change sides during wars between Trucial sheikhs, which makes the political position even more complex. In recent years Bedouins have frequently attacked the motor convoys of British nationals traveling in the definite territory of peaceful sheikhs,[10] but under the provisions of the treaties there seems to be no legal remedy to stop this armed aggression, except through successful local wars by the sheikhs.

As a result of the nature of the treaties, the culture of the area, containing both Arab and Iranian elements, has been preserved practically free of any foreign admixture. Dr. A. R. Lindt,[11] a Swiss observer writing in 1939, was particularly impressed by this achievement. Slowly, however, twentieth-century influences have begun to appear. In the early 1930's Great Britain, in the course of a quarrel over oil concessions in Iran, relocated its air routes to India over Trucial 'Oman instead of Iran. Rights to land seaplanes at Dibai and landplanes at Sharjah were acquired, and maintenance crews and other personnel were permanently stationed there. To ensure safety during local wars, overnight quarters for passengers, with permanent armed guards, were established in a fortified compound near Sharjah. Landing fees, levied according to the number of passengers, were payable to the sheikhs in whose territory landings took place. These landing fees constituted a large part of the revenues of the sheikh of Sharjah, whose only other income is derived from a tax on pearling, which is hard to collect.[12] During the war, rights to make emergency landings on the island of Yas were also acquired by the British government. Today, larger planes can fly directly from Bahrein to Karachi, and little use is made of the landing rights on the Trucial Coast, so that the sheikhs' revenues must have decreased substantially. The introduction of the motorcar has also had a marked effect on the local economy. Traffic from inland oases and the Gulf of 'Oman to the cities on the shores of the Persian Gulf is important, though no statistical data are available.

The presence of oil had been suspected since the beginning of the century, but the inaccessibility of the region together with its uncertain political status

[10] O'Shea, *op. cit.*, p. 13.
[11] Politics in the Persian Gulf, *Journ. Royal Central Asian Soc.*, Vol. 26, 1939, pp. 619–633.
[12] O'Shea, *op. cit.*, pp. 76 and 140.

TABLE II—CONCESSIONS FOR THE EXPLOITATION OF PETROLEUM RESOURCES IN THE SOUTHEASTERN PERSIAN GULF REGION

STATE	CONCESSIONAIRE	DATE	TERM	DEVELOPMENT	REMARKS
QATAR	1. For territory of state: Petroleum Development (Qatar) Ltd., subsidiary of Iraq Petroleum Co.	1935	75 years	Production since 1949; reached in March, 1952, 68,500 barrels a day (March, 1951, 46,500; March, 1950, 34,000; March, 1949, nil).	By arbitration, the concession is to include resources under the sea within the three-mile limit.
	2. For subsurface offshore rights beyond the three-mile limit: Superior Oil Co. of San Francisco, Calif., jointly with Central Mining and Investment Corporation of London, England; concession abandoned and transferred to the Royal Dutch Shell Co., 1952.	1949	Not available		Ditto outside three-mile limit.
ABU DHABI	1. For territory of sheikhdom: Petroleum Development (Trucial Coast) Ltd., subsidiary of Iraq Petroleum Co. 2. For subsurface offshore rights: Superior Oil Co. of San Francisco, Calif.; concession abandoned, 1952.	1939	75 years	Exploration begun in 1950.	Arbitration award as above, 1.
		1949	Not available		Arbitration award as above, 2.
OTHER TRUCIAL STATES	Petroleum Development (Trucial Coast) Ltd.	No details available			
'OMAN	Petroleum Development ('Oman and Dhofar) Ltd., subsidiary of Iraq Petroleum Co.	No details available			
SAUDI ARABIA (part adjoining Trucial 'Oman)	Arabian American Oil Co.	1933	66 years	Exploration begun.	
ADEN PROTECTORATE	Petroleum Concessions Ltd., subsidiary of Iraq Petroleum Co.	No details available			

T seems to have discouraged plans for development. However, in 1935 the sheikh of Qatar signed a concession agreement, and in 1939 the sheikhs of the Trucial Coast followed (Table II). All the concessions were assigned to subsidiaries of the Iraq Petroleum Company in which British, American, Dutch, French, and private interests participate. Until now commercial production of oil has taken place only in Qatar; development in Trucial 'Oman is still in the early exploratory stage. The oil at Qatar is obtained at about 6000 feet from a Jurassic limestone rock reservoir in a long, narrow anticline. It is believed that either these strata or the thick, highly productive Cretaceous sandstone series of Kuwait extend to Trucial 'Oman.

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The State of Qatar

Political conditions in Qatar are less complicated than on the Trucial Coast. Originally Qatar was part of the area covered by the maritime truce, and the various treaties were signed by the sheikh of Bahrein as overlord of Qatar. In 1868, despite a British warning, the sheikh of Bahrein decided to enforce his authority in Qatar by a naval attack against its towns. Great Britain interpreted this as a violation of the maritime truce and in punishment ordered the separation of Qatar from Bahrein and the appointment of a local sheikh of Qatar. Three years later Turkey occupied the neighboring area of Hasa, now the oil-producing district of Saudi Arabia, and placed a permanent garrison in Doha, the capital of Qatar. Despite requests from the sheikhs of Qatar, Great Britain did not confirm the special British-protected status of the peninsula until 1913, when Turkey agreed to withdraw its garrison and to relinquish all claims to the sheikhdom. A condition of the Turkish agreement was that Great Britain should not return Qatar to the sheikh of Bahrein, and thus to the area covered by the Trucial treaties. In this way the sheikhdom of Qatar was established as an independent state under British protection, where one sheikh is the sole master of the internal affairs. Qatar is therefore free from the internal political tribulations of the Trucial Coast, though a dispute with the sheikh of Bahrein on property rights in the extreme northwest end of the peninsula persists to this day. Thus the ruling sheikh was able to sign a valid concession for the exploitation of the oil resources of the whole state, and also to guarantee absence of legal warfare.

Large investments had to be made before the first drop of commercial oil could be produced in Qatar. Practically everything, including labor and even satisfactory drinking water, had to be imported. A jetty for the unloading of cargoes, the first in this part of Arabia, was built in Zekrit, on the east coast of the peninsula close to the oil field of Dukhan, and nearly a hundred thousand tons of cargo had to be discharged over this jetty before the commercial production of oil could begin in 1949. Since then the flow of oil has been profuse, and today Qatar ranks eleventh among the oil-producing states of the world, producing in September, 1952, 67,700 barrels a day, which is more than 0.5 per cent of the world total. Many of the wells yield more than 5000 barrels a day, as compared with an average production per well of 12.8 barrels a day in the United States.

Today Qatar possesses, besides the jetty, an oil terminal with two floating lines for the quick loading of tankers and a large tank farm, both on the east coast at Umm Said. A pipeline connects Umm Said with the oil field at Dukhan, and a second pipeline is being built. In addition, water-distilling

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In addition, water-distilling plants, hospitals, and other installations were set up by the oil company. The first regular police force in the whole southeastern Persian Gulf region is now being established, paid out of the oil revenues. As a result of the economic growth of the state, a British government representative is now permanently stationed in the area, and the first modern bank has opened its offices at Doha, which is assuming some of the functions of a capital city.

Qatar's revenues from oil royalties are estimated to have been about $4,200,000 in 1951. A profit-sharing scheme between the company and the sheikh took effect in September, 1952, and, based on current petroleum production and prices, Qatar's share in the future annual profits is estimated at about $12,000,000.[13]

Impact of Oil Development

From the descriptions of recent visitors it appears that cessation of warfare must precede the effective development of the resources of the Trucial Coast. The drawing of permanent boundaries will be a prerequisite for a truce on land as well as for the division of royalties and possible profit participation schemes. There may already be agreement on some coastal points for boundary delimitation (Table I); inland, perhaps because of the absence of marked physical features, there seem to be no traditional points that might assist in the establishment of boundaries. Some sheikhs are reported to be ready to agree to definite boundaries; for, as Codrai[14] reports, "their appetites [are] wetted [*sic*] by concession subsidies." Writing about the same time, Sir Olaf Caroe[15] remarks that "there will be a scramble to assert and establish rights over land which may be disputed between two or more Shaikhs . . . The worst instincts . . . may then have full play." So far, no announcements of definite boundary decisions or of a general truce in the land fighting have been made, and all the available evidence appears to confirm Sir Olaf Caroe's pessimistic prediction. Meanwhile, for example, the concession of Abu Dhabi reads (translated from the Arabic): "And if in the future there should be carried out a delimitation of the territory belonging to Abu Dhabi . . . then the area (of this Agreement) shall coincide with the boundaries provided in such delimitation."[16] The Bedouins of Trucial 'Oman and their rights and ambitions further complicate the problem; for many of them roam also over territory that may be part of Saudi Arabia, or 'Oman, or Qatar, or possibly Even Aden Protectorate.

[13] Calculated from the *Petroleum Press Service*, Vol. 19, No. 10, London, October, 1952, p. 356.

[14] R. A. Codrai: 'Oman, Including the Trucial Coast, *Canadian Geogr. Journ.*, Vol. 40, 1950, pp. 184–192; reference on p. 192.

[15] Wells of Power (London, 1951), p. 22.

[16] Quoted in *Petroleum Press Service*, Vol. 19, No. 1, January, 1952, p. 6.

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even Aden Protectorate. Present boundaries with these states are vague. Vesey-Fitzgerald,[17] for example, reports that "it seems generally agreed that the [salt pan] Sabkha Mutti forms the boundary" between Saudi Arabia and Trucial 'Oman. Other authorities, including the British Foreign Office Peace Handbook,[18] locate the boundary of Trucial 'Oman at Khor el Odeid, at the base of the peninsula of Qatar, and thus exclude Saudi Arabia from the Persian Gulf east of Qatar. The World Aeronautical Chart[19] shows undemarcated territory of Trucial 'Oman between the 51st and 52nd meridians. Boundaries farther inland are subject to even wider disagreement. Some recent American maps[20] show the whole of the northern Rub' al Khali as part of Saudi Arabia and restrict Trucial 'Oman roughly to the area northeast of the town of Abu Dhabi. A map in the Middle East reference book[21] shows territory of Aden Protectorate to the south of the Liwa Oasis where other maps locate Saudi Arabian territory. Vesey-Fitzgerald[22] reports that the country east of the Sabkha Mutti salt swamp "for the distance of 'one camel journey' inland is Trucial territory. What happens beyond the one day's journey nobody knows." The Sultanate of Muscat and 'Oman, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia,[23] and the Trucial sheikhs, including the sheikh of Abu Dhabi, claim the Buraimi Oasis; the oasis of Hafit is described as jointly owned by the sultan of 'Oman and the sheikh of Abu Dhabi.[24] Coastal points of the eastern boundary of Trucial 'Oman agreed on are Khor Kalba and Dibba on the Gulf of 'Oman and Sha'am on the Persian Gulf; this creates an exclave of 'Oman in the peninsula of Masandam.[25] Iran has also put forward claims to both Qatar and the Trucial Coast, based on tributes paid by sheikhs of the area to Iran centuries ago, and also on the presence of a small Iranian minority

[17] *Op. cit.* [see footnote 9, above], p. 549.

[18] *Loc. cit.* [see footnote 6, above].

[19] Sheet 547, Bahrayn Island, 1:1,000,000, 3rd edit., Aeronautical Chart Service, U.S. Air Force, Washington, D.C., 1950.

[20] For example, as shown by J. T. Duce of the Arabian American Oil Company in "The Near East Today," a paper read before the American Petroleum Institute, November 7, 1951.

[21] "The Middle East," 2nd edit., Europa Publications, London, 1950, p. 7.

[22] *Op. cit.* [see footnote 9, above], p. 549.

[23] Wilfred Thesiger: Desert Borderlands of Oman. *Geogr. Journ.*, Vol. 116, 1950, pp. 137–171; reference on p. 140. The *New York Times* printed the following in its issue of October 12, 1952: "The Saudi Arabian Government denied through its embassy in Washington last night that any of its armed forces were in the Buraimi region near the Persian Gulf. The British Foreign Office was reported to have said Thursday that forty armed Saudi-Arabians had occupied an oasis claimed by the Sultanate of Masqat (Muscat). In its statement King Ibn Saud's embassy charged that the British had sent troops and planes to the area."

[24] O'Shea, *op. cit.* [see footnote 3, above], p. 177.

[25] Bertram Thomas: The Musandam Peninsula and Its People the Shihuh, *Journ. Central Asian Soc.*, Vol. 16, 1929, pp. 71–86.

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in the towns along the coast. A further basis of the Iranian claim is the high proportion of the trade of the region that appears to flow to and from Iran, and is in the hands of Iranian traders, many of whom have migrated to the coast in the last 25 years. In 1951 discussions were reported to have begun between Great Britain and Saudi Arabia regarding the boundaries between the various British protectorates and Saudi Arabia, but at the time of this writing (late 1952) no conclusions have been announced.

Despite these political uncertainties and the resulting absence of civil authority, test wells are being drilled in Trucial 'Oman. Two in the sheikhdom of Dibai (at Jebel Ali and Ras Sedr) have been abandoned at a depth of 12,000 feet. A third well, in the sheikhdom of Abu Dhabi, is now planned, 12 miles inland from Tarif. Because of the shallow waters off Tarif, drilling equipment and other supplies will have to be discharged at Zubaya, 65 miles distant. As in Qatar, considerable local construction will be necessary before any commercial production of oil can be undertaken.

Since President Truman's claim in 1945 to United States jurisdiction over the resources located underneath the shallow seas of the continental shelf off the United States, no fewer than eleven states in the Persian Gulf area have asserted similar, if not more sweeping, rights, in spite of the absence of many boundaries on land.[26] Probably most of these claims contradict one another. So far, oil has been struck at only one point offshore in the Persian Gulf, in the extreme northwest part, effectively claimed by Saudi Arabia. However, even before this discovery the sheikhs of Qatar and Abu Dhabi, independently of each other, had granted concessions to their proclaimed offshore resources to another company, which is not a partner in the Saudi Arabian oil concession or in the Iraq Petroleum Company. In both cases the subsidiaries of this company holding the oil concessions from Qatar and from the sheikhdoms of Trucial 'Oman complained that these offshore concessions infringed on their rights, which they maintained included all resources under the jurisdiction of the sheikhs. Both disputes were arbitrated under the terms of the concession agreements. In 1950 the arbitrator in the case of Qatar, Lord Radcliffe, distinguished between the territory of Qatar, which includes the sea and subsurface resources up to the three-mile limit, and other rights of Qatar in the open sea beyond the three-mile limit. Throughout the territory of Qatar as defined by the arbitrator the concession of the Iraq Petroleum Company's subsidiary is valid; elsewhere, wherever

[26] S. W. Boggs: National Claims in Adjacent Seas, *Geogr. Rev.*, Vol. 41, 1951, pp. 185–209, summarizes the complicated situation before arbitration.

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Qatar has rights under the sea, the concession holds.[17] In a somewhat different context the concessions of Abu Dhabi were similarly defined by the arbitrator, Lord Asquith, in 1951.[18] Neither of the arbitrations, however, touched on the states' boundaries in or under the Persian Gulf, which therefore remain open to dispute.[19] It is now possible that, in view of the action of the United Nations proposed by the International Law Commission,[20] rights to resources underneath shallow seas will be defined according to technological criteria of exploitation rather than geographical proximity. Should the United Nations act speedily on this proposal, the evolution of the maritime status of the Trucial sheikhdoms may continue to precede the establishment of political order on land.

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[17] In 1952 the nonterritorial concession was surrendered by the concessionaire. It was subsequently acquired by the Royal Dutch Shell, which is a partner in the Iraq Petroleum Company.

[18] In 1952 the nonterritorial concession was abandoned by the concessionaire.

[19] Several petroleum trade journals have given the area of the Qatar nonterritorial concession as 10,300 square miles. This measurement would indicate definite boundaries in the Persian Gulf; however, no authority for such boundaries appears to be available.

[20] United Nations, Report of the International Law Commission, General Assembly, Official Records, Sixth Session, Supplement No. 9 (A/1858), New York, 1951, pp. 26 ff.